

The Oxford Year  
and other  
Oxford Poems

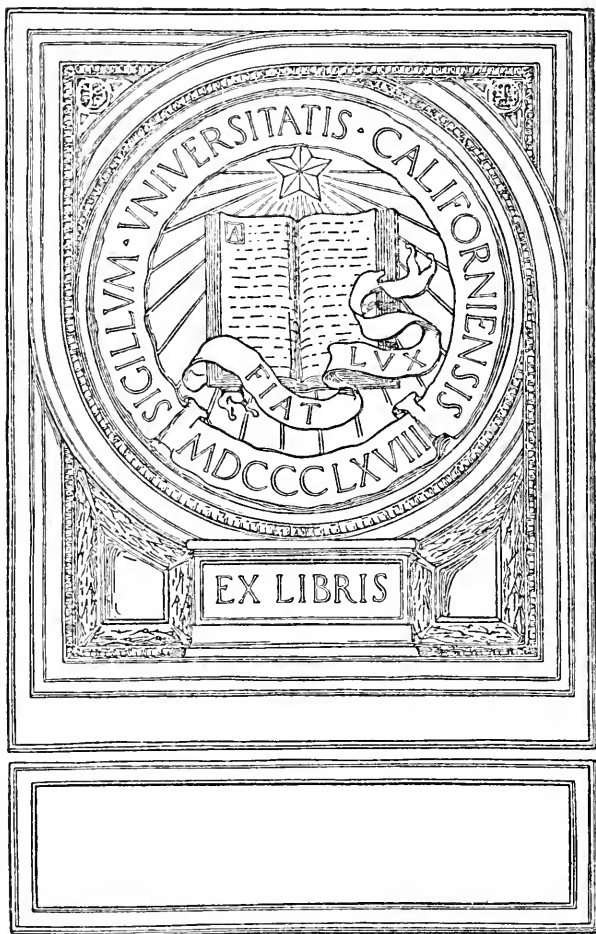
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J. WILLIAMS

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# THE OXFORD YEAR

*A thousand things, dear Oxford, owe I thee,  
Take this instalment of my debt from me ;  
A little gift it is, but still his best  
From one alike thy debtor and thy guest.*

# THE OXFORD YEAR

AND OTHER OXFORD POEMS

BY

JAMES WILLIAMS

LINCOLN COLLEGE

OXFORD

B. H. BLACKWELL, 50 & 51 BROAD STREET

OXFORD

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## PREFATORY NOTE

ABOUT half the compositions in this volume have appeared in various periodicals, chiefly the *Oxford Magazine* and the old *Oxford Review* in the days when it was a weekly and not a daily paper. Certain allusions may perhaps be a little obsolete to the present generation, such as that, for instance, to the ‘blue testamur.’ But in all these cases it has been thought better to leave the verses as they were originally written.



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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE OXFORD YEAR . . . . .	1
OXFORD . . . . .	13
CHRIST CHURCH . . . . .	15
COTSWOLD . . . . .	16
MINSTER LOVELL . . . . .	17
SANDFORD . . . . .	18
IFFLEY . . . . .	19
CHERWELL STREAM . . . . .	20
BLenheim PARK . . . . .	21
LODGINGS FOR NEXT TERM . . . . .	22
A NURSERY OF EMPIRE . . . . .	24
MATER AVE! . . . . .	26
THE OXFORD HORACE . . . . .	28
LAURIGER HORATIUS . . . . .	47
THE STORY OF A BABYLONIAN BRICK . . . . .	48
BEJAUNUS . . . . .	50
THE MEDIAEVAL STUDENT . . . . .	52
ST. SCHOLASTICA'S DAY . . . . .	55
HOW HENRICUS DE BRACTON RODE THE EYRE . . . . .	57
THE FRESHMAN'S DREAM . . . . .	60
THE PIOUS FOUNDER . . . . .	61
THE SMUG . . . . .	62
THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST . . . . .	63
REMINISCENCES OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION, 1894 . . . . .	65
JUSTINIAN AT WINDERMERE . . . . .	67
BOSTON IN OXFORD . . . . .	71
BALLADE OF THE SUMMER TERM . . . . .	74
BALLADE OF THE LONG VACATION . . . . .	76
BALLADE OF SPEED THE PLOUGH . . . . .	78
RONDEAU OF AN OXFORD BOOKSTALL . . . . .	80

	PAGE
CHAUCER . . . . .	81
THE PHENOMENA OF ARATUS . . . . .	83
BACK AGAIN . . . . .	84
ODE TO A SHIRT CUFF . . . . .	86
SOMEWHERE . . . . .	87
AFTER SHENSTONE . . . . .	89
A B.C.L.'S DANCE . . . . .	91
WE DONS . . . . .	94
THE DON AS LOVER . . . . .	96
THE DON AS BOHEMIAN . . . . .	98
THE DON AS J.P. . . . .	100
HOW I WAS PLOUGHED IN SMALLS . . . . .	102
DREAMS IN COLLEGE . . . . .	103
IL COMBATTIMENTO RUGGIERO . . . . .	105
AN EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED CANTO OF DANTE	107
MY FIRST TORPID . . . . .	109
EIGHTS WEEK . . . . .	112
RESPICE FINEM . . . . .	113
COACHING FROM THE BANK . . . . .	115
TAEDET HORUM TORPIDORUM . . . . .	117
THE LECTURE LIST, 1950 . . . . .	120
THE EIGHTS RACES, 2001 . . . . .	122
ANY FATHER TO ANY SON . . . . .	125

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## JANUARY

SILENCE and solitude right well become .  
Cold January ploughlands brown and bare,  
The birds are housed where best they may, nor dare  
Break into song where Nature sitteth numb.  
Monotonously murmureth a hum  
Of voices homeward from a village fair,  
And save that sound upon the sensitive air  
It is as though the very earth were dumb.  
Slow dips the sun behind the hill, grotesque  
The shadows lay their trembling length upon  
Spring-thirsty woods, and dead is day's delight.  
Their boughs frame many a leafless arabesque  
Enamelled on the crimson sky, anon  
The cottage hearths burn clear and it is night.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## FEBRUARY

PALE February silvers Magdalen tower,  
Whiles Christ Church roofs rise dim against sky-sheen,  
That one may not adjudge or blue or green,  
So subtle are its changes in an hour.

Far to the northward slanting raindrifts scour  
Forlorn Otmoor, and launch them cold and keen  
On Charlton belfry, where the jackdaws preen  
Brave wings no more as from the storm they cower.

But Oxford is all sun, and many a heart  
Beats faster for the pity of that sun  
Refreshing jaded eye and weary brain.

High hopes wax higher, feeling not the smart  
Of eager striving for a goal that none  
Approach except they toil, and few may gain.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## MARCH

THE Thames is full ; the ridge of Bagley Hill  
Smiles at the gentle touch of infant spring.  
'Tis genial Nature's first awakening ;  
Awake she seems to sleep, she is so still.  
Deep brown the water whirls beneath the mill,  
The startled thrush, too terrified to sing,  
As comes a racing boat along, takes wing  
And ends far off his interrupted trill.  
Anon the purple twilight with its veil  
Makes mellow distance of St. Mary's spire,  
And casts its shade on one belated sail.  
The wild March clouds are orled with sunset fire,  
Night mists creep slowly up the river dale  
And hide the bridge that joineth shire to shire.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## APRIL

Down to the meadow from the bridge she came,  
And stood for sunshine to the sunless day;  
The clouds that hid the heaven lost half their gray,  
The pollards purged them of their look of shame.  
Ah me, that I may never know her name,  
Or whence she was or whither went her way,  
Or whether she were grave of soul or gay,  
Or whether she were damosel or dame!  
This only do I know, I wished that I  
Were Petrarch or were he of Hawthornden  
To frame soft verse and make her pulses stir.  
Ah me, that she is gone and night draws nigh!  
But hope springs ever young in hearts of men,  
And life is richer for the sight of her.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## MAY

WHAT city boasts herself the peer of thee,  
Dear Oxford, when the mist of morning clings  
Round Magdalen elms, or when the even flings  
Her rosy robe on river, hill, and lea?  
The spirit of the summer rises free  
From winter sleep and spreads her silver wings,  
The sunny sky holds dreams of nobler things,  
Dreams drifting helmless on a fairy sea!  
In the green distance smites through cloister doors  
The swift and rhythmic throb of racing oars,  
The shout of victory and of defeat.  
Oxford is Oxford most when May is May,  
And Cherwell oarsmen pluck them hawthorn spray  
From trees unpruned that shelter stripling wheat.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## JUNE

A LITTLE gabled inn, a withy bower,  
A ferry bell, a punt beclugged with weed,  
Strong heat of noon that quivers in the mead,  
Disjointed talk that drags from hour to hour ;  
Faint thither drifts the chime of Magdalén tower,  
The cuckoo tells his name to all that heed,  
Anon a wary vole disturbs a reed  
Or shakes the pollen from an iris flower.  
Unchanged all save ourselves ! Once student-gowned  
We gazed upon a brighter world, when truth  
Was what we sought and dreamed sometimes we  
found.  
Oh for the days when thought perchance uncouth  
Was honest in its search, with all around  
Transfigured by the eager hope of youth



# THE OXFORD YEAR

## JULY

JULY the first; I lay me at mine ease  
Where in a cornfield scarlet poppies glow  
Turned to the sun, and wheat stands row by row  
Rained on by pollen dropped from osier trees.  
A weathercock creaks harshly to the breeze,  
Crown of a lithe white spire; then deep and slow  
The hour of noontide strikes, and long and low  
The echoes linger in the hillside leas.  
Such pleasure well suffices me to-day,  
The eye hath rest in green, and for the ear—  
It hath the caw of rook and scream of jay,  
And feathered reeds that rustle in the mere,  
While laugh of merry children in the hay  
Is earnest of the riches of the year.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## AUGUST

DELICATE city, bearing on thy brow  
The wreath of ancient learning and the sheen  
Of beauty ever young, immortal queen,  
No heart but must thy goodness allow.  
Once more would I hear rippling round my prow  
The placid streams o'er which thy willows lean,  
Or part the reeds that fringe the meadows green  
Where crowned with towers majestic sittest thou.  
In thee I learned to love the toil that brings  
Forth from the treasured wisdom of the wise  
The truth that must be truth for evermore.  
In thee my soul first dared on golden wings  
Afar in empyrean realms to soar,  
And from the child first felt the man arise.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## SEPTEMBER

I OFFER thee a picture wrought in rime  
By autumn painted on a Berkshire down  
When Nature circles with her golden crown  
Majestic heads of rowan and of lime.  
Faint fall the sheep-bells with their mournful chime  
Half silenced by the curfew of the town  
That seems to ring the knell of old renown  
Cheated of immortality by time.  
Rooks whirl between the spires of Abingdon  
And clumps of Wittenham toward stubbles crossed  
By paths that swerve through haspless gates ajar.  
The day is past, the twilight is begun,  
With it the souls that we have loved and lost  
Look from the bastions of the evening star.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## OCTOBER

LONG weeks of Arctic and unfriendly seas  
Round the black steeps of Iceland, till to-day  
Familiar Oxford bids bestow away  
Icelandic scenes among our memories.  
Still throng they almost as realities  
Upon the soul, so vividly do they  
Recall the plain untilled, the beachless bay,  
The geyser's column bending to the breeze.  
Imagination sits with mindful brow  
And hears the wraiths of summers bygone speak  
Of unforgotten things still dear to her;  
Creating her from Thames a Bruará,  
From Cumnor Hill a white volcanic peak,  
While lava reefs congeal on Shotover.

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## NOVEMBER

HERE will I halt and mark low clouds drift by,  
And let the north wind beat against my face,  
While leafless boughs of trembling birches trace  
Strange arabesques across the evening sky.  
Swift to their roost the rooks and starlings fly,  
The hinds urge on their homeward herds apace,  
A star now veiled in cloud, now seen a space  
Heralds the night, and all alone am I.  
For colour seek I, finding what I sought,  
Vermilion berries stricken by the breath  
Of first November frosts until they fall.  
Behold their teaching understood of all,  
The footprints of inevitable death,  
The burden of inevitable thought!

# THE OXFORD YEAR

## DECEMBER

THE pallid sun of winter sinks behind  
The leafless hill of Wytham ; homeward fare  
Shepherds with dragging steps, relieved of care,  
To supper and to blazing hearth inclined.  
Spring sleeps awhile, from this malicious wind  
Untimely birds at noon so debonair  
Shrink shivering under branches bleak and bare  
That would protect but needs must be unkind.  
Shorn pollards ranged in column sentinel  
Brown floods that surge and bubble like the sea  
With jeopardy in their delusive deeps.  
All seems like death, still soon will primrose dell  
And meadow leap with life, and love will be  
No more like one who sits apart and weeps.

## OXFORD

### I

FAIR queen of cities with thy crown of towers,  
Here sit I dreaming through the summer hours  
Beneath an oak where Cherwell's stream is deep,  
Where at my feet white water-lilies sleep,  
What time the Wytham woods and Cumnor dells  
Echo the moaning of cathedral bells ;  
What time June sunset hath incarnadined  
Grey walls by Tudor mason-craft designed.  
Adown the river striplings blithe and glad  
As in the olden days drift flannel-clad,  
Beribboned with the Christ Church white and blue,  
The Magdalen scarlet, or the brown of New.  
Dear Oxford, sweet and sad thy memories are !  
Here found I Homer, Plato like a star  
Guided my steps, and friends I won in thee,  
And oh, that friends as true as books might be !  
In thee the meaning of the world began,  
I put off boyhood and became a man.  
Wherefore I count thee, while my tongue can speak,  
Unrivalled, unapproachable, unique.

II

HERE Wolsey smote his foes in thought, and here  
 Locke wove the web of his philosophy,  
 And Arnold's brow was kissed by poesy,  
 And Newman's heart was sick with doubt and fear.  
 All dead! The wreaths upon their graves are sere,  
 In dreams of them come other dreams to me  
 Of things that are as though they could not be,  
 Of things that could not be as though they were.  
 Ah me! when youth had hope and years were few,  
 I saw myself a Wolsey or a Locke,  
 I would not stoop to be—what I have been.  
 Then came Experience with her sword and slew  
 The fancied self, and violet and stock  
 Lose hue and scent with that dead face between.



## CHRIST CHURCH

THE great cathedral bells had ceased to chime,  
Upon the mighty masses of the trees  
There fell once more the tremor of the breeze  
With gentle speech for oak and elm and lime.  
The sun in noontide splendour seemed to climb  
The ladder of the heavens, by twos and threes  
Blithe children raced along the gravelled leas  
Shadowed by turrets marvellous with time.  
Faint as the shamefast promise of a bride  
Swam through the wood the voice of summertide,  
And overhead the swift and swallow swirled.  
At last there came in musical accord  
The chant of men abased before their Lord,  
'O God the Son, Redeemer of the world!'

## COTSWOLD

HALF England at my feet ; long slopes whose blue  
Fades in the blue of heaven ; the curve and gleam  
Of coy Sabrina hasting seaward through  
Broad river meads where resting mowers dream.  
With courteous whisper Western breezes woo  
Smooth-shafted beeches, forest queens supreme,  
Deep in their midst there winds an avenue  
Wherein a carter sings beside his team.  
Hard by this spot beneath a summer sun  
Perchance the fallow greyhound was outrun,  
And Slender over Shallow vaunted him <sup>1</sup>.  
Perchance 'twas not ; enough that on these hills  
For me the cunning hand of Nature fills  
Her silver cup of beauty to the brim.

<sup>1</sup> *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act i. sc. i.

## MINSTER LOVELL

HERE where the mid-swirl rushes bend and sway  
On either bank a the water-marigold  
Puts forth rank leaves, forget-me-nots less bold  
Smile shy mid alder roots where sedge-birds play.  
Here let thy selfish miseries make way  
For hopes of happier things, and here behold  
The current of an English stream unfold  
Beauty unchanged yet changing day by day.  
Mark where yon plover screams her dire mistrust,  
Follow till Windrush leads thy venturous feet  
To crumbling relics of a civil strife.  
When spring is young then Nature is most just,  
She pays her winter debt, then all complete  
Creates the strength that gives the world its life.

## SANDFORD

DISTINCTLY with the calm of eventide

Comes plashing of the water in the weir,  
The tolling of the Christ Church bell rings clear,  
For life is silent in the country side.

Between the locks two shallops homeward glide,  
A glimpse and they are past, then straight and sheer  
The image of the moon's ascending sphere  
Sleeps on the pool where two rash swimmers died.

Bowed are the heads of late fritillaries,  
The fields are void of cattle, from afar  
Floats scent of hidden meadowsweet and bine.

No more on lilac bushes hang the bees  
Where blackbirds build, then smiles the evening star  
On river meadows fringed with celandine.

## IFFLEY

ALL shattered lies the glory of the elms,  
Their crown of autumn gold, whose falling fills  
Long fallows rising on the lonely hills  
Toward drifting clouds that mask celestial realms.  
The crisp leaves ere they die glow dull like helms  
Of marching men in mist, the woodland rills  
Stand choked, to keep the wheels of watermills  
Clear of their load is work that overwhelms.  
Nature seems dead to-day ; a little space  
And she will bring her forces to the fore  
To drive the hosts of winter from their place.  
Then shall she see again the river shore  
Gay with new grass what time the sun's fair face  
Assumes in heaven the summer smile of yore.

## CHERWELL STREAM

ONE morn emparadised in greenery  
Of fern and flag in glowing June I lay ;  
Their damp scythes piled against an alder tree  
The mowers rested in the fragrant hay.  
Then rose the river-spirit unto me,  
Where fell still shadows from the sedges gray,  
All was he rough and wrinkled like the sea  
That moans along the rocks of Norroway.  
'As my dark river winds among the meads,  
So winds the stream of sorrow in the years,  
And by its brink the summer flowers are few.'  
So spake he ; at my feet last season's reeds  
Familiar things still murmured in my ears,  
Antique philosophy disguised as new.

## BLLENHEIM PARK

AT times there is a day that valiant deeds  
Repeat themselves and one can mark the cry  
Of ancient battle in the fields, the sigh  
Of vanquished cohorts low amid the reeds.  
Then wakes the solitary thought that feeds  
On visions of the past, ere men put by  
All pomp of war, and when they strove anigh  
With streaming standards and with charging steeds.  
Such day of memories it is to-day,  
Meseems the roll of guns at Malplaquet  
Smites indistinctly on expectant ears.  
Meseems the mighty masses of the trees  
Are tremulous with sound of victories  
And tramp of flying France and English cheers.

## LODGINGS FOR NEXT TERM

My landlady has put it up at last,  
The 'Lodgings for Next Term';  
Three years with all their joy and grief are past;  
I were but pachyderm  
Did I, dear Oxford, think it shame to tell  
The love I bear to thee,  
The glory and the glamour and the spell  
That thou hast wrought in me.

Thou gavest me the hearts of honest friends,—  
Alas! some beat no more;  
Though earth with earth in many a graveyard blends,  
I have in me a store  
Of memories whose taste is bitter-sweet,  
God gives and takes away;  
Perchance it is such thoughts that tired my feet  
Unwontedly to-day.

I passed the green God's-acre where he lies,  
My hero and my king;  
No cause hath he to fear, so calm and wise,  
The great awakening.



## LODGINGS FOR NEXT TERM

Wan autumn leaves are rustling from the trees  
To bring him in his sleep  
Sounds like the music of his own loved seas,  
The call of deep to deep.

Dear Oxford! thankless have I been to thee:  
My heart is very sore;  
I cannot speak the love I have in me,  
But I can love thee more;  
There will be times when in the war of life  
The trumpet call will cease  
And I shall mark beyond the smoke of strife  
Thy beauty and thy peace.

With some choice friend of all the friends I made—  
When seemed the world among  
The Sandford meadows or the Cherwell shade  
Unalterably young—  
I will recount the deeds that once we wrought,  
(We were distinguished then,)  
And sigh to think that all is but a thought,  
We must to work again.

## A NURSERY OF EMPIRE

THERE is a city where the waters meet,  
Cherwell and Thames, and very dear is she  
To all her myriad sons who at her feet  
Have learned her mystery.

Remembrance of her crown of spires they bear  
Deep in their heart of hearts through half the world,  
Where peace hath won her victories, or where  
The war-flag is unfurled.

Her sons salute her from Canadian falls,  
From fanes of Nile and palms of Borneo,  
From Himalayan dales with glacier walls  
Clad in white weeds of snow.

They love her none the less, but all the more,  
When sea and land have added mile to mile  
To part them from the city where they bore  
Life lightly once a while.

And there are days perchance, when smites the sun  
Sheer on a Libyan veldt or Indian plain,  
That they would wish their manhood's years begun  
By her gray towers again.

## A NURSERY OF EMPIRE

Sent forth as rulers from the banks of Thames,  
They long for but one sight of midland trees ;  
Amid the sheen of Orient gold and gems  
Their swift souls pass the seas ;

In thought they watch the racing oars flash by,  
Propelled by strenuous strength, or mark the cheer  
As toward the goal-posts soars the ball on high,  
And victory is near ;

Once more they saunter over Cumnor Hurst,  
Or join at Bablock Hythe the ferried team,  
Until the glass of life appears reversed,  
To-day to be the dream.

## MATER AVE !

*Mater ave atque vale !*

Now that it is all too late  
Reverence increaseth daily,  
Reverence inadequate.

Three short years ago the starting,  
Race for good or evil won  
Three short years, and now the parting ;  
Hath the race been lost or won ?

Ah, that I have never known thee,  
Alma Mater, till the end !  
Wiser now I wax and own thee  
Mother, teacher, lover, friend.

Deeper evermore and deeper  
Sinks remembrance of thy halls,  
Where the red Virginia creeper  
Fades in flame along the walls ;

Where the curfew music, spreading  
Mist-like over stream and town,  
Tells the hour to shepherds treading  
Homeward on the folded down.

## MATER AVE !

We thy children, Alma Mater,  
Fail in words of love and fire,  
History may tell thee later  
What a mother can inspire.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

Od. i., 1

O'FLAHERTY, seed of Irish kings,  
How various men love various things !  
Some take delight in tee and put,  
And some in racing through the Gut,  
Another whirls his Dunlop tyre  
Through clouds of dust and seas of mire,  
Perchance a wiser ne than th ese  
Finds happiness in Cherwell trees,  
And anchored in his punt applies  
His mind to darting dragon-flies,  
To meadows carpeted with May,  
To West winds rustling in the hay.  
For others be the martial tramp,  
The bugle of parade in camp,  
For others in another place  
The fever of the fervent chase ;  
Enough for me to sing my song  
Unnoticed by the busy throng,  
Until some day with laurelled brow  
I strike the stars, I know not how.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### i. 4

'Tis Summer Term, and now the germ  
Of sun and warmth is springing,  
And Salter's men to light again  
The last year's punts are bringing.

The frost is gone, straw hats are on  
A month before the races,  
'Tis time to quote what Horace wrote  
Anent the Nymphs and Graces.

Had we in Rome but found our home  
We should be crowned with roses,  
Or offer ram or kid or lamb  
Where Pan or Dryad dozes.

Pale death comes fast, when we at last  
In Pluto's halls lie hidden  
Our lips will kiss no cup like this,  
And wine will be forbidden.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### i. 8

LYDIA, come and tell me why  
Thou art tempting Jones of Merton?  
Football field he passes by,  
Scorning shorts with honest dirt on.

Never now an I. C. S.  
Trots he insecure through Wheatley,  
Never dons his cricket dress,  
He that fielded point so neatly.

Never coaches eight or four,  
Never has a moment's leisure,  
Never plunges any more  
Headlong into Parson's Pleasure.

Like Achilles he forgets  
All his golf and all his riding;  
He entwined in Cupid's nets  
Like Achilles needs—a hiding.



## THE OXFORD HORACE

### i. 9

THE snow is deep on Shotover,  
In Cumnor Hurst the oak and fir  
    With icicles are gleaming ;  
Pile high the coals right lavishly  
And let the generous Burgundy  
    Upon the board be beaming.

Once more the ship obeys her helm,  
Nor feel the cypress and the elm  
    The storms that were their sorrow ;  
Take thou what Fortune sends, nor ask  
If thou wilt have a harder task  
    Appointed thee to-morrow.

Scorn not delicious love, the day  
Will come when scanty locks of gray  
    Will be all left to thatch thee ;  
Bring *her* in due time to the Eights,  
Tell her thou hatest celibates  
    And hast a mind to match thee.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### i. 11

WHY awkward questions, why, Leuconoë ?  
Why seek to learn thy fate by palmistry ?  
Bear thou what Heaven hath sent and with thy mates  
Thy hockey play and eat thy chocolates.  
E'en as we write the envious Schools draw near,  
Enjoy the present, they are not yet here.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### I. 14

GOOD ship, the heart-congealing boom  
Of Tims's gun hath sealed thy doom.  
In vain the pleading of thy coach  
Makes Iffley echo with reproach.  
Canst thou not see the swift pursuit  
Approach thy rudder foot by foot,  
The while thy cox hath lost his head  
And thy pale stroke is like one dead?  
What boots the boast that thou dost shine  
Honduras cedar, Norway pine,  
Thy oars with College colours bright,  
Thy bow with College emblem dight?  
The prudent College captain cares  
For none of these aesthetic snares.  
Alas! the hours I spent on thee,  
And this is thy return to me!  
What at the Willows seemed afar  
Will spurt and bump thee at the Cher.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### I. 16

FAIR child of mother scarce less fair,  
Go, cast these verses to the air,  
Or let the doggrel be  
The sport of flame or sea.

Thine anger overwhelms thee sore,  
No irate God or priest of yore,  
Not even Jupiter,  
Could make so great a stir.

'Twas anger dug Thyestes' tomb  
And caused full many a city's doom,  
And in the Schools ere now  
Oft drave the hostile plough.

To-day I'll get me down and fill  
The weary hours with golf until  
Cool tea again I get  
At Lady Margaret.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### I. 20

THOU shalt have a foaming glass  
Brewed by estimable Bass  
In the year when happy fate  
Won for thee the Newdigate,  
When thy comrades knew no pause  
Ceaseless in their wild applause,  
Till the sound could wellnigh stir  
Rowan boughs on Shotover.  
I have nought more choice than it,  
Modest purses shun Lafitte,  
Nor can scholars' battels go  
All the length of Veuve Clicquot.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### I. 32

THEY call me. Banjo, come, prepare  
To give them a plantation air !  
Get ready to accompany  
My famous song of Tennessee,  
The song that was encored the most  
Along the Carolina coast,  
Composed by me to celebrate  
The blackest nigger in the State.  
If but my banjo fail me not  
In this more academic spot,  
A prouder triumph will be mine,  
The plaudits of an Oxford wine.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### II. 3

REMEMBER well that thou abide  
Untroubled whatsoe'er betide,  
    Or sorrow or the glass  
    Of cup mid shade and grass.

Bring hither all that makes life fair,  
Cool wine and roses debonair,  
    The while the Sisters three  
    Allow such things to be.

'Tis certain that thou soon must cede  
Thy rooms that look on Christ Church mead,  
    And thy scout bow the knee  
    To one more rich than thee.

We travel all the selfsame way,  
June laughs at lecture notes of May,  
    So all alike we bow  
    Our necks before the plough.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### II. 6

WE have travelled oftentimes,  
Septimus, in other climes,  
Paced the patios of Cadiz,  
Viewed the veiled Algerian ladies,  
Minarets of Tripoli,  
Isles of the Ionian sea ;  
Still wherever I may roam  
Hither turn I for my home.  
When my life has reached its crisis  
Let me meet it by the Isis,  
Let me mark the sheep-bell shrill  
Up the slope of Wytham hill,  
Or the rooks in April caw  
Circling over Marston shaw.  
Here the meadows mile on mile  
Greet me with familiar smile,  
Here the cottager will set us  
Honey worthy of Hymettus,  
While if home-made wine be bad  
Wholesome cider may be had.  
Here ambitionless would I  
Simply live and calmly die,



## THE OXFORD HORACE

Wrestling down the thought that craves  
Music of the cliffs and waves.  
When thou standest by my bier,  
Brother poet, spare a tear.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### II. 10

ATTEND pass lectures, trouble not thyself  
With laboured law or false philosophy  
Or bloodless wars of Ghibelline and Guelf,  
Go, take a pass degree !

Be thou true lover of the golden mean,  
Be not an outlaw thrust from learning's gates,  
Nor yet aspire to that blue air serene  
That wreathes a First in Greats.

For 'tis the highest things the Fates abase,  
The gale lays low the monarchs of the hurst,  
It is the hilltops that the fiery mace  
Of lightning smites the first.

As passman thou hast nought to fear in sooth,  
Why shouldst thou always wear thy coat of mail ?  
When fortune smiles be strong, when all is smooth  
Prepare to shorten sail.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### II. 15

SCARCE south of Summertown are sowed  
    The furrows of the fields of wheat,  
    The elms that once were all complete  
Stand stumps along the Woodstock road.

Beside that road once grew there up  
    The primrose and the violet,  
    And eglantine with dew was wet  
And foxgloves drooped with pendant cup.

Another and a tramless town  
    Foresaw not then St. Philip's apse  
    Or men that sported bounder caps  
Above the academic gown.

Then fellows lived for common room,  
    North Oxford heard the low of kine,  
    And Univ. had no fell design  
Of aggravating Shelley's doom.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### III. 7

IN Somerville, Asterie,  
Why weepest thou? Soon wilt thou see  
Thy faithful Gyges; in his hand  
Gold from deep levels on the Rand  
And diamonds from Kimberley.  
Along Madeira coasteth he  
From thy fair Capetown rival free,  
For he hath other fish to land  
In Somerville.

Stand firm as Gyges, faithful flee  
Enipeus serenading thee.  
Make clear that serenades are banned,  
For all that ye are undermanned  
And only dons may come to tea  
In Somerville.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### IV. 3

HE whom thou, Melpomene,  
    Lookest on with glance of favour  
Rugger captain will not see  
    Cambridge forwards break and waver,  
Steeplechaser will not lead  
    Over stiffest timber flying,  
Patriotic will not bleed  
    Often in the Kriegspiel dying.  
His is quite another fate,  
    Singer he by wood and water,  
Framing rimes that celebrate  
    Charms of some one else's daughter.  
Such am I ; the critics say  
    I am rightly called a poet,  
Now in Oxford not a day  
    Passes but I let them know it.  
London-bound with Gladstone bag  
    Once I heard on Reading Station,  
'There 's the poet of the *Mag.* !'  
    Muse, 'tis all of thy creation.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### EPOD. 2

‘THRICE happy he who far from bursar’s desk  
Begins to cultivate the picturesque,  
Abandons thoughts of India three per cents  
And ceases pressing for arrears of rents,  
Forgets all gas bills and all district rates  
And battels due from undergraduates.  
For him the country life has matchless charms,  
The low of oxen and the peace of farms,  
The coo of pigeons and the hum of bees,  
The summer silence hidden in the trees.  
There in the happy noon he rears his ricks  
And trains his scarlet-runners round their sticks.  
Or in the autumn by the woodland shorn  
He joins the huntsman brisk with hound and horn,  
He sees the pheasant or the partridge rise  
For one brief space ere stricken down it dies.  
There love and matrimony are tabooed,  
Your hind is nothing if he is not rude.  
For him sufficient is the simple creed  
That life beneath a thatch is life indeed.  
Whitebait, asparagus, and early lamb  
Are nought compared with eggs and home-cured ham,

## THE OXFORD HORACE

Desire of vintages of France must fail  
Before a pint of home-brewed village ale.'  
So sighed the bursar of St. Boniface  
With dreams of solitude for dwelling-place,  
Then sat and wrote about arrears of tithe  
A dunning note that made a tenant writhe.

## THE OXFORD HORACE

### EPOD. 4

WHEN we were in the Lower Fourth at school  
I was head boy and thou wast but a fool,  
And every day the fourth form master's cane  
Was cause to thee of justly suffered pain.  
Now all is changed, thou art a millionaire,  
But strip thyself and find the stripes still there.  
Thou drivest in the Park thy equipage  
Till honest men exclaim with noble rage:  
'An ass at school, an ass at Oxford he,  
The veriest ass who ever took degree!  
The Secretary of the Faculties  
Was quite ashamed to take his frequent fees.  
And now the King has dubbed this creature knight  
In recompense of wrong and not of right.  
What boots our empire over land and sea  
With him a Colonel in the Yeomanry?'



## LAURIGER HORATIUS

Translated from the German Commersbuch.

HORACE, Love's own laureate,  
Truly doth assure us,  
Time devouring small and great  
Flieth swift as Eurus.  
Where, ye goblets, are ye gone,  
Wine and honey laden?  
Peace from strife and kisses won  
Of a blushing maiden?

Grow the clusters of the vine,  
And the maiden groweth,  
Poet's hair is grey, and wine—  
Lack of it he knoweth.  
What avails immortal worth  
If there be denied him  
Love of daughters of the earth  
And a glass beside him?

## THE STORY OF A BABYLONIAN BRICK

THREE parts I played within my time  
Before I lay forgotten,  
Embedded in Euphrates slime,  
And just a trifle rotten.

At first I was a tavern score ;  
E'en now my spirit hardens,  
Remembering the things I bore  
Beside the hanging gardens.

The "Shalmaneser Arms" one day  
Began to use papyrus,  
So I was pitched in scorn away  
Before the time of Cyrus.

Then came an undergraduate  
And graded at Tigris College  
My sides with Nabonassar's date  
And other scraps of knowledge.

His lecture notes were never long,  
For bricks take room at lecture ;  
His Median verse was mostly wrong,  
His quantities conjecture.

## THE STORY OF A BABYLONIAN BRICK

The Babylon B.A., one knows,  
Was meant for those more clever :  
They ploughed him in his Hittite prose,  
And he went down for ever.

But ere he went he scraped me clean,  
And carved his will and wishes,  
And they two thousand years have been  
A puzzle for the fishes.

‘ To Tigris College I devise  
My big Assyrian pewter :  
It is to be a challenge prize  
For Canaan Union footer.

‘ And every one who gets a goal  
Upon the ground at Babel  
Shall have his name upon the bowl,  
And drink from it at table.’

The brick is here, the cup a dream ;  
Men may not find out whether  
There ever was a Dead Sea team,  
And how they played together ;

And whether dromedary fare  
Was claimed in desert matches ;  
And how they reckoned half-time there,  
With sundials for watches.

## BEJAUNUS

The bejaunus (*bec jaune*) was the freshman of the mediaeval university, and Aberdeen still knows him as the *bejun*. At Aix he was liable to *tres ictus* with a *sartago* (frying-pan) unless the Rector yielded to the prayer of ladies *nobilium sive honestarum si ibidem reperiantur*. (See Rashdall, vol. ii. p. 635.)

### BEJAUNUS.

I AM but a base bejaunus,  
Freshman from the founts of Taunus ;  
Hearken to me, Lady Bella ;  
*Terrae flos et caeli stella.*  
Thou art great and I am lowly,  
Hark with ears divine and holy.  
'Thou of pain shalt have thy skinful,'  
Say these students fierce and sinful.  
Lady, if thou wilt not hear me,  
Much and very much I fear me,  
*Poenae mihi stat imago,*  
*Pendet super me sartago,*  
*Ignobilitate devictus*  
Must I fall by those *tres ictus*.  
Save me, lady beauty-wreathen,  
Succour me from heartless heathen.

## BEJAUNUS

Mercy dwells with thee, thou donnest  
Robes of noble dame and honest—  
Lady, what if one above me  
High as thou could even love me?

DOMINA.

Nay, bejaunus, thou dost weary,  
Thou art infinitely dreary,  
*Unde, puer, disce quare*  
*Semper nollem te amare;*  
I am clad in silk and ermine,  
Thou art most presuming vermin.

BEJAUNUS.

*Eheu! vapulo ut Hector,*  
*Miserere mei, Rector;*  
I shall not be long a-dying  
When the pan has ceased from frying.

DOMINA.

Fare thee well, obeisance make we,  
Let him have it, men of Aquae;  
Let him be for ever *dictus*  
Protomartyr of the *ictus*.

## THE MEDIAEVAL STUDENT

Scotus and a Latin Plato—

Nought our student knew of Greek—  
No tobacco, no potato,  
Disputations twice a week.

He was quite a rank outsider,  
Never had his people up,  
Was not cricketer or rider,  
Never heard of claret-cup.

Now and then a blood-stained battle  
Surging through the frightened town  
Drowned the ineffective rattle  
Sprung for aid against the gown.

Combat was his recreation,  
Combat, and the real thing ;  
Football is an imitation  
Far and feebly following.

When his fight was over, bleeding  
Crept he to his fireless hall,  
Patient for his chance of reading  
Manuscripts misused by all.

## THE MEDIAEVAL STUDENT

When at nine the curfew thundered,  
Shivering rose he from his form,  
Stamped his feet in vain and wondered  
If he ever would be warm.

Beaumont Palace and Bocardo  
Northward marked he day by day,  
Names that live, for *pede tardo*  
Names in Oxford pass away.

Did his tutor and his lecture  
Muddle as they muddle now?  
We to-day can but conjecture  
If he called a plough a plough.

Bacon of the *Opus Majus*  
Viva'd him an hour perchance  
Till his spirit once courageous  
Wavered in a troubled trance.

Ockham may have said demurely,  
'Never mind Franciscan tips!'  
Howlers of the period surely  
Flowed in plenty from his lips.

Life was costly, for the student  
Kept examiners in view,  
Were he moderately prudent,  
If he wanted to be through.

## THE MEDIAEVAL STUDENT

So his Ockham or his Bacon

Primed he well with stoups of ale

That his viva might be taken

Ere the smack of it should fail.



## ST. SCHOLASTICA'S DAY

FEBRUARY 10, 135 $\frac{3}{4}$

INTO the Mermaid Tavern,  
Nigh unto Carfax, reeled  
Walter de Springheuse of Merton  
And Roger de Chesterfield.

John de Croydon he served them  
Stoups of Canaris sack ;  
When he asked for his pennies,  
Pennies they both did lack.

‘Naughty, John, was thy liquor ;  
Never for such we pay’—  
So quoth Walter de Springheuse  
On St. Scholastica’s day.

Then the clerks and the burghers  
Bows and arrows they took,  
Towers of Martin’s and Mary’s  
Straight with alarm-bells shook.

‘Rescous, Scholars of Oxford !’  
‘Burghers of Oxford, to arms !’  
‘Have at them, yeomen of Hinksey,  
Hinds of Headington farms !’

## ST. SCHOLASTICA'S DAY

All the High Street was flowing  
Red with blood of the slain,  
Never such slaughter in Oxford  
Since the days of the Dane.

Chancellor, he is to Woodstock,  
Woodstock, to see the King ;  
Mayor, he is safe in the chantry  
Hearing the White Friars sing.

Citizens, ye must pay for  
All the blood that was shed !  
Mary's bell, thou must toll for  
Souls of the scholars dead !

Sheriff, get thee from office !  
Mayor, to the Marshalsea !  
Sinning City of Oxford,  
An interdict for thee !

‘ Mark what comes of Canaris  
Corked and badly sealed ! ’  
So quoth Walter de Springheuse  
And Roger de Chesterfield.

## HOW HENRICUS DE BRACTON RODE THE EYRE

‘OH bring me here my robe and coif, for I must ride  
the eyre,

And bring me eke the safest steed that ever thou canst  
hire.

For I must ride to Oxenforde to judge the lieges there,  
And much I fear lest on my steed some student pranks  
should dare.

Willelmus de Salopia with me the eyre will ride,  
And he hath wholesome dread like me of what he may  
bestride,

And he hath dire mistrust like me of clerkës young and  
bold

With no respect for royalty or reverence for the old—  
Untaught, untonsured Irishry, or villeins from the fens,  
Who lie in wait by Carfax tower for peaceful citizens.  
Would Heaven that I Henricus had such folk before my  
Court!

The rope that hanged them should be long, their shrift  
it should be short;

Of malefactors thus should be bepurgèd the merry land,  
So lord should claim his land’s escheat and King his  
deodand.’

## HOW DE BRACTON RODE THE EYRE

Then rode they down from Headington and over Cherwell bridge,

The gallows-tree loomed black and sheer upon the Castle ridge.

Escorted by the burgesses and by the mayor they came,  
By sheriff of our Lord the King, by coroner from Thame,

And never such a pageant was since once in years of yore  
The Great Justiciar came himself and hanged above a score.

Then sat Henricus in his Court, full sore was he of hide,  
Much used was he to vellum scripts but little used to ride.

Then Giles de Woodstocke called they up, with mayhem charged they him,

For putting John de Garsington in jeopardy of limb.

‘Now benefit of clergy I,’ quoth Giles de Woodstocke,  
‘claim,

Then hand me here the neck-verse down and I will read the same.

What matters that I smote John sore that day in Cumnor Hurst

When I can read a verse or two of Psalm the fifty-first?’

‘The Court doth hold,’ Henricus said, ‘it cannot say him nay,

Then heat the brand and burn him deep, he goes without a day.’

## HOW DE BRACTON RODE THE EYRE

Darrein presentment next he tried, for all were in the  
dark

Who had the right in Banbury to institute a clerk.

Disseisins novel one or two he tried, and barratry,  
And half a score he left for fruit upon the gallows-tree.

Then at the last towards Gloucester town the justices  
forth rode

To find that floods had carried off the bridge of Even-  
lode.

In vain Henricus moved himself to issue out a writ

Directed to the Evenlode of *quare impedit*;

And they for whom the sheriff raised the gallows in the  
town

Had laughed to see a hanging judge himself so near to  
drown.

## THE FRESHMAN'S DREAM

I DREAMED of days of learned peace  
What time I joined St. Patrick's College,  
My object being to increase  
Knowledge.

With prose I mortified my soul,  
Full dreary was the room I sat in,  
Each hour more distant seemed my goal,  
Latin.

At last for other goals I fought,  
I gave up prose and took to Soccer,  
And read the shilling bookstall-bought  
Shocker.

Still something stays ; I'll lay a sov.,  
Though unbelieving be my tutor,  
That I still know the aorist of  
*Utor.*

My dreams are proved untrue, afar  
I get me humble and degreeless,  
My future will be at the Bar  
Feeless.

## THE PIOUS FOUNDER

THE pious founder once said he,  
‘ I may not found a family,  
*Non uxor est episcopo,*  
Then failing her my crowns shall go  
To build a Hall endowed by me.’  
’Twas built, and it was fair to see,  
Till came the nineteenth century  
And wiser men than he cried, ‘ Blow  
The pious founder ! ’

He only took a pass degree,  
He lived before biology,  
He was a mere barbarian—so  
They quashed his statutes—now they know  
The reason of his rarity,  
The pious founder.

## THE SMUG

HE dwelt amid untrodden ways,  
Beside the stream of Cher,  
A smug whom there were few to praise,  
But many more to bar.

‘ A violet by a mossy stone  
Half-hidden from the eye,’  
Was scarcely the description one  
Would recognize him by.

He lived unknown, and few could know  
If he would sink or swim ;  
But he is ploughed in Smalls, and oh,  
The difference to him !



## THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

ALAS that milk is seldom pure !

Alas that there are flies in ointment !

Alas that what we think most sure

Is only sure of disappointment !

I worked at the Museum strong

In hope of being demonstrator,

'Twas certain soon or late, but long

Is hope, and late has grown to later.

Alas, the poor morphologist

Is starving in the midst of plenty !

For that small berth that I just missed

The candidates were five-and-twenty.

No wonder that they say to me,

‘Why, Peter, you have grown much thinner !’

*Pâté de germes gras* is my tea,

And protoplasm fried my dinner.

High aims, low place, and poverty

Compose *necessitas trinoda*,

I scarce afford one day in three

My glass of vitriol and soda.

## THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Dour poverty ! 'tis little sport

When her pinched face draws nigh to trouble you,  
And you must drink Museum port  
Composed of  $H_4O_2W$ .

The wings of hospitality

Are clipped amid these days of sorrow,  
Still come and take pot-luck with me  
From one to half-past one to-morrow.

There's only rotifer—cold roast—

And galantine of protozoa,  
And stewed tarantulas on toast,  
And haricot white ants from Goa.

Then comforted with our repast,

With conscience still and spirit placid,  
We'll fill our pipes with fibrous bast,  
Nor spare the pyrogallic acid.

# REMINISCENCES OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION, 1894

BY A CLASSICAL LECTURER

A WEEK of science! Now I know  
Why scientists call *tuum meum*,  
And why the fines of Proctors go  
For lecture-rooms at the Museum.

I started on biology,  
A sage in spectacles was trying  
To prove that death and life agree,  
And life is but a mode of dying.

Biology became a bore  
Until I took to mathematics,  
And heard for half an hour or more  
Hypotheses in hydrostatics.

Among the anthropologists  
I saw stone footballs from Buncrana,  
And prehistoric scoring lists  
Of cavemen's cricket in Guiana.

## THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION, 1894

Yes, science is a high pursuit,  
And these ascidians in a bottle  
Will make the reason more acute  
Than all the works of Aristotle.

And now my lot in life it seems  
(If life be not a mere misnomer)  
To find the subject of my dreams  
Homology in place of Homer.

I even dream that Sophocles  
Combined with tartrate of Tibullus  
Makes sulphide of Simonides,  
Or carbohydrate of Catullus.

What if my mind, convinced at last,  
Rejects exploded hermeneutics  
For hydrogen and hypoblast  
And theories of therapeutics?

## JUSTINIAN AT WINDERMERE

WE took a hundredweight of books  
To Windermere between us,  
Our dons had blessed our studious looks  
Had they but chanced to see us.

Maine, Blackstone, Sandars, all were there,  
And Hallam's *Middle Ages*,  
And Austin with his style so rare,  
And Poste's enticing pages.

We started well ; the little inn  
Was deadly dull and quiet,  
As dull as Mrs. Wood's *East Lynne*  
Or as the verse of Wyatt.

Without distraction thus we read  
From nine until eleven,  
Then rowed and sailed until we fed  
On potted char at seven.

Two hours of work ! We could devote  
Next day to recreation,  
Much illness springs, so doctors say,  
From lack of relaxation.

## JUSTINIAN AT WINDERMERE

At noon we went upon the lake,  
We could not stand the slowness  
Of our lone inn, so dined on steak  
(They *called* it steak) at Bowness.

We wrestled with the steak, when lo !  
Rose Jack in such a hurry,  
He saw a girl he used to know  
In Suffolk or in Surrey.

What matter which ? To think that she  
Should lure him from his duty !  
For Jack, I knew, would always be  
A very slave to beauty.

And so it proved, alas ! for Jack  
Grew taciturn and thinner,  
Was out all day alone, and back  
Too often late for dinner.

What could I do ? His walks and rows  
All led to one conclusion ;  
I could not read ; our work, Heaven knows,  
Was nothing but confusion.

Like Jack I went about alone,  
Saw Wordsworth's writing-table,  
And made the higher by a stone  
The ' man ' upon Great Gable.

## JUSTINIAN AT WINDERMERE

At last there came a sudden pause  
To all his wandering *solus*,  
He learned what writers on the laws  
Of Rome had meant by *dolus*.

The Suffolk (was it Surrey ?) flirt  
Without a pang threw over  
Poor Jack and all his works like dirt  
Before a richer lover.

We read one morning just to say  
We had not been quite idle,  
And then to end the arduous day  
Enjoyed a swim in Rydal.

Next day the hundredweight of books  
Was packed once more in cases,  
We left the lakes and hills and brooks  
And southward turned our faces.

Three months, and then the Oxford Schools ;  
Our unbelieving College  
Saw better than ourselves what fools  
Pretend sometimes to knowledge.

Curst questions ! Jack did only one,  
He gave as his opinion  
That of the Roman jurists none  
Had lived before Justinian.

## JUSTINIAN AT WINDERMERE

I answered two, but all I did  
Was lacking in discretion,  
I reckoned guardianship amid  
The *vitia* of possession.

My second shot was wilder still,  
I held that *commodata*  
Could not attest a praetor's will  
Because of *culpa lata*.

We waited fruitlessly that night,  
There came no blue *testamur*,  
Nor was Jack's heavy heart made light  
By that sweet word *Amamur*.



## BOSTON IN OXFORD

‘TERRIBLY have we been tossed on  
Tall Atlantic waves since Boston ;  
Will you, for our time is scant,  
Show us all that’s elegant ? ’  
So the letter said—and I—  
What could I do but comply ?  
One was called Selina Sampson,  
The other Henrietta Hampson.  
Meeting them at Oxford Station  
First I gave them a collation,  
Ox-tail soup and pie of rooks,  
Work of heavy-handed cooks,  
Deprecating like a bumpkin  
Lack of pork and beans and pumpkin.  
Then I showed them all I knew,  
Here a chapel, there a blue,  
Here a garden, there a gate,  
Here a window, there an eight,  
Till at last we finished feeble,  
Brain and body tired, at Keble,  
Where upon a narrow flat form  
We discussed the silver platform.

## BOSTON IN OXFORD

Then Selina said, 'I guess  
We can see the students mess ;  
Is it where they do their eating  
That they also go to meeting ?'  
I replied I guessed they couldn't,  
If I chose the College wouldn't.  
'But,' said I, 'may I conjecture  
You would like to hear a lecture?  
Would you like to go and dance on  
Legal tight-ropes twined by A——n?  
Dream of Pembrokeshire and peace  
'Neath the Celtic tones of R——s?  
Peradventure try and dredge worth  
Out of economic E——h ?'  
'No,' cried they, 'but if 'tis handy  
Find a store well stocked with candy.'  
With the candy sucked they knowledge,  
Questioned me of every College,  
Specially when I had said  
There was one where students read.  
'Which was that? And was it true  
That the oldest one was New ?'  
Points not easy of solution  
Save by mental evolution.  
So I turned the conversation,  
Asking what a sister nation  
Found of Oxford things most striking.  
'Oh !' said both, 'it is the biking,

## BOSTON IN OXFORD

Feet are yielding to their rivals,  
Bound to be disused survivals,  
Happen unipeds will then  
Be evolved like tailless men.'  
So they said ; in Massachusetts  
Both of them belonged to blue sets  
Where they shot upon the wing  
Science, art, and everything.  
Then devotions to the teapot,  
Then I took them to the dépôt ;  
They remarked they'd be dodgasted  
But 'twas lovely while it lasted,  
They would lay me half a dime  
They had had a real time.  
Now I'm jealous as Othello,  
Jealous of some Boston fellow,  
Who he is I cannot tell,  
But he is my Dr. Fell,  
He will marry Henrietta,  
If we meet, why then—vendetta !

## BALLADE OF THE SUMMER TERM

THE captain of the College eight  
Had made a galley-slave of me  
Because I was about the weight  
To make a most indifferent three.  
Bumped first of all by Trinity,  
Six places in as many nights  
In that accursèd craft lost we ;  
Yes, Summer Term has keen delights.

From sliding seats in woful state  
I hailed good news right merrily,  
To Oxford at an early date  
Would come my 'unexpressive she '  
Commem. and all its sights to see.  
Alas ! alone I saw the sights,  
For ladies' plans 'gang oft agley' ;  
Yes, Summer Term has keen delights.

The crowning mercy of my fate  
Approached, to modern history  
My reading had been consecrate.  
Then came the day that I must dree  
My weird within the Schools, and be

## BALLADE OF THE SUMMER TERM

With other most unhappy wights  
From burden of testamurs free ;  
Yes, Summer Term has keen delights.

### *L'Envoy.*

Dean, if you send me down, with glee  
I'll act you to the life in tights  
In some Athenian comedy ;  
Yes, Summer Term has keen delights.

## BALLADE OF THE LONG VACATION

THE Long Vacation ! Teraptingly  
Stand books to skip and books to read ;  
It may be modern history,  
It may be science that doth plead  
' Now, now ! ' or law so prone to lead  
The student by a stony way,  
Until he cries, ' In very deed,  
Vacation is a time of play.'

It may be Greats philosophy,  
With more or less exclusive creed—  
But whatsoever it may be  
The brain a-weary runs to seed  
And seeks its honourable meed,  
Reward of many a toilsome day,  
And bids the library God-speed ;  
Vacation is a time of play.

Farewell, good University !  
Farewell, and leave the thought to feed,  
Beside the forest or the sea,  
Not on Justinian or on Bede  
Or structure of the centipede,

## BALLADE OF THE LONG VACATION

But on the beach of some calm bay,  
On highland heath or woodland weed ;  
Vacation is a time of play.

### *L'Envoy.*

Vice-Chancellor, right sore my need  
Of rushing brook and ripening hay ;  
All ready is my cycling steed ;  
Vacation is a time of play.

## BALLADE OF SPEED THE PLOUGH

STERN Stagirites who rule Group A,  
Mute local Adam Smiths of B,  
Look kindly on the curt essay  
Of one who hopeth hopelessly !  
Political Economy,  
Let mercy smooth thy wrinkled brow !  
The martyrs of the Schools are we—  
Cut *viva* short and speed the plough !

There was a day, a happier day,  
When all our life was passed in glee,  
When Schools were something far away,  
And thought, if limited, was free,  
When over cigarettes and tea  
Agnostic minds refused to bow  
Before outworn philosophy—  
Cut *viva* short and speed the plough.

Alas ! the little victims play  
Regardless of the high degree,  
The woman-coveted B.A.,  
With Summer Term their only plea.  
So sport the herrings in the sea



## BALLADE OF SPEED THE PLOUGH

Through summer hours, and mark not how  
The trawlers sail from Yarmouth quay—  
Cut *viva* short and speed the plough.

### *L'Envoy.*

Examiners, 'tis half-past three ;  
In my blank book, if you'll allow,  
I'll write but just one big, big D—  
Cut *viva* short and speed the plough.

## RONDEAU OF AN OXFORD BOOKSTALL

A BLOOMIN' poet ! Here's a go !  
Why, Petrarch was a horse, you know,  
And now you come and gammon me  
About some bloke in Italy  
Who made his oof by poetry.  
You bet that what's-her-name said, ' Blow  
Them sonnets, they're uncommon slow.'  
I should have done if I'd been she ;  
    A bloomin' poet !

Snakes ! what a life, so mean and low,  
No Sandown Park, not e'en the Row,  
No ring, no Epsom, no Roodee ;  
He didn't know which end, maybe,  
Of horses tails of horses grow,  
    A bloomin' poet !

## CHAUCER

‘In one sense Chaucer is the poet of the Schools.’ (Courthope’s  
*History of English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 296.)

FETCH me forth a cup and saucer,  
Pour the coffee ere it cools,  
Let me drink the health of Chaucer,  
Poet of the Oxford Schools.

Mr. Courthope with his far sight  
Revolutionizes us,  
Gives us Palamon and Arcite,  
Obsolete is Æschylus.

Sophocles and Jebb are owls,  
Dug by Skeat their humble grave is,  
While the Parliament of Fowls  
Vengefully repeals the Aves.

But of all the change the best is  
That we lose Euripides,  
Hecuba and with Alcestis  
Her stout champion Heracles.

## CHAUCER

Gleefully through Moderations

Passmen tread the primrose path,  
Scoring in examinations

Triumph with the Wife of Bath.

Hand upon an English tiller

All the stormy seas are past,  
Now the sumpnour and the miller  
Steer one safe to port at last.

## THE PHENOMENA OF ARATUS

A TONGUE that cleaveth to the mouth,  
A throat that is a thing of drouth,  
An answer framed to seem as though  
'Twere but a tithe of what I know ;  
                  These are the Phenomena of Aratus.

A foolish pen that spareth not  
To write down rot and rot and rot,  
A furtive look around me where  
Each hand bodes fate, each eye despair ;  
                  These are the Phenomena of Aratus.

A viva of a word or two,  
Then, ' Thanks, we need not trouble you,'  
And over all the fallacy,  
They don't plough all, so why plough me ?  
                  These are the Phenomena of Aratus.

## BACK AGAIN

THE academic New Year's Day  
Is here again in all its rigour,  
Once more we come to floor Group A  
With valiant heart and hopeful vigour.

Alas for me! I cannot hide  
My apprehensions for December;  
For Schools have marred my Christmastide  
More times than I can quite remember.

We come to hear the Magdalen chimes,  
To see the pinnacles of Merton,  
To sconce, as in the sunnier times,  
In gallons of the College Burton.

The phalanx of our faithful friends  
Has grown appreciably thinner,  
Strange aspect of the Freshmen lends  
A look of *table d'hôte* to dinner.

Yes, Jones—the least bit of an ass—  
Has settled down for life in Mona,  
And Robinson is in Madras,  
And Brown Vice-Consul at Ancona.

## BACK AGAIN

Anon in hall and quad are heard  
    Condolence and congratulations ;  
The First who thought himself a Third  
    No more distrusts examinations :

But what of him, the marvellous,  
    Who rhymed like Pope and sang like Linus,  
Who thought himself an  $\alpha$  +  
    And found himself a  $\gamma$  - ?

In truth a class is little worth,  
    The system at its core is rotten,  
For I could get an easy Fourth  
    In all the things I have forgotten.

## ODE TO A SHIRT CUFF

COMRADE, why this shabby trick?

Thou wast trained to make suggestions,  
Orthodox or heretic,

Should a storm of hopeless questions  
Gather threatening and thick.

On thy polished surface lurk

History and other topics,  
Facts about the Slav and Turk,

Dates connected with the tropics,  
All to save the writer work.

Comrade, not a single one

Could be used in any paper,  
Though thou hadst thy figures done  
Infinitely thin and taper.  
Honesty is better fun.

Now I burn thee, caution saith

Servants' eyes are sometimes prying,  
Tell me with thy latest breath

Is it plough or colours flying?  
Is it life or is it death?



## SOMEWHERE

SOMEWHERE in Cocaigne must be  
Sight that some may live to see,  
Perfect University.

Somewhere proctors never rove,  
Safe as is the beach at Hove  
Is the academic grove.

Somewhere passmen never rue  
What examiners can do,  
Every candidate is through.

Somewhere classes are not four,  
What the need when each doth score  
Alpha plus's five or more ?

Somewhere when the rag is high  
Tutors wink the other eye  
Till the storm has thundered by.

Somewhere banquets wait in hall,  
Wines of costly brand withal,  
'Tis the Bursar pays for all.

## SOMEWHERE

Somewhere battels disappear,  
Save a charge for wine and beer,  
Half a guinea once a year.

Somewhere no one has to keep  
Roll or Chapel half-asleep  
When December snow is deep.

Somewhere Eights and Torpids too  
Have no duffers in the crew,  
Everybody is a Blue.

Somewhere football teams fulfil  
All that their supporters will,  
Always fifteen goals to nil.

Somewhere all these marvels may  
Be a commonplace to-day,  
In Corea or Cathay.

## AFTER SHENSTONE

BY A MEMBER OF CONGREGATION

I HAVE found out a gift for my fair,  
I have found it this Valentine's day :  
I will vote to allow her to wear  
The so long denied gown of B.A.

That will win her if nothing else will,  
For her way is a wonderful way,  
And she knows that with grace she can fill  
A good tailor-made gown of B.A.

Her complexion is not very good,  
And she cannot wear anything gay,  
But the plain black and white of the hood  
Would become her right well as B.A.

'Tis a matter of moment to me,—  
We have fixed to be married in May,  
If she is but allowed her degree ;  
But she will not be bride till B.A.

## AFTER SHENSTONE

She was ploughed for the London Matric.,  
And the Euclid examiners say  
That her beautiful head is too thick  
To be crammed for the London B.A.

She must needs come to Oxford, and now  
There may be the (bad language) to pay,  
If she holds to her obstinate vow  
Not to wed me until she's B.A.

## A B.C.L.'s DANCE

‘ENOUGH of you, good Institutes!’

Quoth I, and then, refreshed and hearty,  
I donned my patent leather boots  
And drove to Lady Jones’ party.

At once I saw a damsel fair,  
And wished that she were in my *manus*,  
But all I did was just to stare  
Like rude *Latinus Iunianus*.

I asked if she would valse with me,  
She answered she was held *in bonis*  
By Captain Smith for No. 3,  
But there was *spes successionis*.

*Civilis obligatio*

Then called me forth to do my duty,  
*Ius gentium* forbade me go  
Without *obsequium* to beauty.

I made a *iuris vinculum*

Of my bent arm with clasp emphatic,  
But caused her dire *incommodum*  
By ignorance and steps erratic.

## A B.C.L.'s DANCE

The pace was anything but slow,

We charged the chairs and fouled the fender,  
I thought of *obsignatio*

At supper when the tongue was 'tender.'

*O filiafamilias !*

You were a most accomplished dancer,  
And as to your *hereditas*

Most reassuring was the answer.

'Tis over ; wishing Lady Jones

Politest *formulae in factum*

I hail a cab, and sulky tones

Accept my eighteenpenny *pactum*.

And as I drive there come to me

Strange dreams of *dos* and *causa data*,

And coming *iustae nuptiae*,

And possible immense *legata*.

I should be quit of all regrets

If I could only wed Selina,

If she would make of all my debts

Adoption even *minus plena*.

Then on the *leges* of our life

Old Time would never put a veto,

Nor husband dare to such a wife

Say, *Tuas tibi res habeto*.

## A B.C.L.'s DANCE

Dreams, dreams ! I come to Lincoln's Inn,  
To fire burned out and chambers cheerless,  
And sigh to think I may not win  
The hand of that *pupilla* peerless.

I can't afford to be hard hit,  
Alas ! it would be *culpa lata*,  
When on my table lies a writ—  
*Pecunia non numerata*.

## WE DONS

GRAVE dons are we and stately :  
Like you, we once were men,—  
Perchance not very lately ;  
I dare not tell you when.

The barrister and doctor  
Lived much like you his day,  
Like you loved not a proctor,  
And shrank before Group A.

M.P. and judge and vicar  
Made howlers in the Schools ;  
Your skulls are no whit thicker,  
For most of *us* were fools.

And men now Heads of Houses—  
With bated breath I speak—  
Fired off at bump carouses  
Impromptu puns in Greek.

We did not walk as stiffly  
As now we have to do,  
We brought an eight from Iffley  
About as fast as you.



## WE DONS

This minister now stickit  
A double blue was he,  
And no one now keeps wicket  
As well as that M.P.

The fire of sport still smoulders  
In bursars and in deans ;  
Just look at those broad shoulders !  
They made six bumps for Queen's.

Those legs seem thin and feeble ;  
Two goals—or was it three?—  
They kicked that day when Keble  
Played University.

We trained and raced and spurted  
Just as you do to-day,  
And just like you we flirted  
Upon the Cher in May.

For all that the Canader  
Was then a thing unknown,  
We took a punt and made her  
An Eden of our own.

Oft now amid the clamour  
Of mellow Magdalen chimes  
We feel the golden glamour  
Of those brave olden times.

## THE DON AS LOVER

EHEU! *Musa* with genitive *Musae*,  
I am in an indicative mood,  
I will tell all the world about Susy  
Whom so far to my grief I have wooed.

I will publish it forth in good Attic  
That my girl is the pride of her sex,  
And will solve with a soul mathematic  
The equation where Susy is  $x$ .

May a cube be of twenty dimensions  
If I give up my suit in despair;  
May an adverb have moods and declensions  
If I doubt that she's true as she's fair!

She has cut an immense conic section  
Of elliptical form in my heart:  
Eheu! what is the Greek for 'affection,'  
And the Latin for 'love' and for 'dart'?

Come, Smith minor, I'll hear your  $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\mu\iota$ ,  
The imperative mood is  $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\upsilon$ ;  
'Tis an omen: sweet Susy, bestow me  
The reward of my faith, it is thou.

## THE DON AS LOVER

But her heart's like the seed of a lupine,  
It is hard, so the botanists say ;  
And her ears were both passive and supine  
To the Sapphics I sent her to-day.

Though I tell her the death-rate of Ennis,  
The dimensions of Westminster Hall,  
Nought she cares, but is off to lawn-tennis  
With a man who knows nothing at all.

For my rival, that prince of barbarians,  
Let her love such a cub if she can ;  
He has not even heard of the Aryans,  
He's unsound in the uses of *ἄν*.

Ah ! I feel like the Emperor Nero  
Must have felt about something A.D.,  
But my dates they are blank, they are zero,  
When my Susy won't listen to me.

I am teaching that *καί* is enclitic,  
My philology seems to have gone,  
I have just said the Scotch are Semitic—  
And all this from a Boniface don !

## THE DON AS BOHEMIAN

Oh for the valiant young times,  
Times of the work so unsteady !  
Then the deep Westminster chimes  
Found me all eager and ready  
To pound out a sonnet to Rachel or Rhoda,  
To write a review near a brandy and soda.

Then at the Gaiety bar  
Strange were the creatures one wined with,  
He who'd been paid for a 'par.'  
Certainly had to be dined with,  
All friends of the Strand were by nation Bohemian,  
And ranging from Anarchist downward to Fenian.

Oxford, I love thee, thou art  
Such a respectable city,  
But if one trip at the start  
Little he winneth of pity ;  
Ah me ! in old Fleet Street they looked not so sadly,  
It was the best fellows who acted most madly.

## THE DON AS BOHEMIAN

Oxford, I love thee, there are

Boys in thy streets who still clamour

‘ Latest edition of *Star* ! ’

Bringing me back to the glamour

Of days when a pressman, and eager and shoppy,

I thought that the world held its breath at my copy.

## THE DON AS J.P.

I HASTE to shores of Northern seas  
To act the rôle of unpaid proctor,  
I heal disputes in families  
Without a doctor.

Here none may send a man to quod  
For treating lectures with derision,  
But there we wield the legal rod  
With more precision.

There cutting lectures is a crime  
For which we make the parent suffer ;  
*He* pays the fine or does the time,  
*He*, not the duffer.

Rebuilders of the things that are,  
Behold your chance of architecture !  
Let sires be pent by bolt and bar  
When sons cut lecture.

At county sessions we commit  
The slackers with their rates and taxes,  
And for a season they must quit  
Their ploughs and axes.

THE DON AS J.P.

I would that every bursar had  
Such power with slackers over battels,  
To confiscate book, shorts, and pad  
And other chattels.

Hard on the undergraduate,  
But better for the patient bursar,  
Though many a room be desolate,  
Though language terser.

Oh for those Northern shores again,  
Where break the billows bubbling, rippling,  
A land that never reads Hall Caine,  
And knows not Kipling!

## HOW I WAS PLOUGHED IN SMALLS

WE were ranged in long rows in those horrible halls,  
And the funk it was great though the papers were  
Smalls,

And we wrote down a *patois* we called Latin Prose,  
Such as '*solus jam rosa*,' 'The sun now arose.'

Oh my stars! *meae stellae*! my thoughts are from home,  
I am gushing with Greece, I am rampant with Rome,  
Though I never quite see how the choruses scan,  
And Horace is A 1 for ploughing a man.

Absent-minded for Massic I ask when I dine,  
I conjugate 'Rugger' and 'Togger' decline,  
And I carry my shorts with a classical grace,  
And allude to the Eight in the optative case.

They thought I was through, but I knew I was not,  
For the Ablative Absolute clean was forgot,  
And the *quippe qui* never came off as it should,  
And the *quominus* governed a genitive mood.

Though I air my pet phrases, I'm ploughed once again;  
Ah! for hopes that are high and for views that are vain.  
*Ah! visus qui vanos altissimum spe!*  
For the mist of futurity hides my degree!



## DREAMS IN COLLEGE

A BRAIN inured to scheming,  
Cloud castles in the air,  
The gift divine of dreaming  
Of things that never were ;

Such Nature gave me, only  
I never lose my head  
Except when I am lonely  
And half awake in bed.

Then I upbuild me wonders  
Of stern and stately rime,  
And launch my lyric thunders  
At evils of the time.

Imagination scanty  
Inflames my venturous quill,  
Creates of me a Dante  
Or something higher still ;

Writes verse to verse with Homer  
(And mine are quite as good),  
Or with that wild young roamer  
Who poached in Charlecote Wood.

## DREAMS IN COLLEGE

'Tis always in the morning  
Before at stroke of eight  
The chapel bell gives warning,  
    'Too late, too late, too late

Although men do not know it  
The world has never seen  
A more distinguished poet—  
In theory I mean.

## IL COMBATTIMENTO RUGGIERO

A FOOTBALL MATCH IN DANTE'S *Inferno*

THEN came we to another circle where  
Some thirty struggled, all their visages  
Dark with Tamigi slime, and oftentimes  
As sparrows from the tower of Pisa rush  
With wings aspread and fall upon the crumbs  
Cast them by charitable cooks, as Guelfs  
Rushed upon Ghibellines at Campaldino,  
So rushed the rivals on Tamigi meads.  
There came to watch them such as shrank with cold,  
Wrapped in long cowlèd cloaks like minor friars,  
From San Giovanni, Nuovo, Trinità,  
Chiesa di Cristo, and the lesser halls  
Of Reina's and Vadama and Gesù,  
But none from Tutte Anime, for there  
Dwell dons not men, and advocates of Londra  
Therein find whist and drink of ancient strength,  
Deep-hued and marvellous. The thirty then  
Got them to toilsome strife, and much I heard  
Of goalo and offsido and scrimmagio,  
And mezzo tempo and esperimento,  
Then blew a whistle and the conflict ceased.  
'Lo! these are they,' said Virgil, and my guide

## IL COMBATTIMENTO RUGGIERO

Smiled his rare smile, 'who in Osfordia's schools  
Attempted conquest and received defeat.  
The prose of Tullio had for them no charms,  
Erodoto was as a book close-sealed,  
Wherefore each day beneath the towers of Dis  
On Stygian meads they sport the selfsame sport  
That once by fair Tamigi turned their hearts  
From beauty of the Greek and Latin tongues.  
'Tis called Ruggiero; rivalry held he  
With one Soccerò, and all Inghilterra  
Was parcelled out betwixt them; even was  
The strife of giants and the battle drawn.'  
'Master,' said I, 'full awful is their doom;  
Less awful if they be allowed the birra  
Wherefore I pine; say, may they quaff from pewter  
The foaming goblet brewed on Trenta's bank?'  
'It is denied,' quoth he. I wept salt tears;  
Like them for birra and for scian di gaffa  
I sought in vain through all that darkling land.  
'To fight and always have the battle drawn,  
To thirst and never be allowed to drink,  
To be begrimed with mud and have no bath,  
O cruel fate!' said I, and sighed, and passed  
On to the stream of Styx where evermore  
Eight spirit oarsmen urged a spirit boat  
To touch a spirit rudder ever flying  
A length in front, and Charon as they pass  
Shouts 'You are gaining!' thrice in every hour.

AN EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED  
CANTO OF DANTE

. . . . .  
THEN passed I to another circle where  
Beside the stream that laves the walls of Dis  
Lay many forms of men in strange attire.  
Some wore the cross of Godfrey<sup>1</sup>, some again  
The fleur-de-lis of Florence<sup>2</sup>, some again  
The eagle of the Empire<sup>3</sup>, cardinals<sup>4</sup>  
And bishops<sup>5</sup> others seemed ; but all alike  
Swung like the galley-slaves by Tripoli  
Sent forth in pirate barks to spoil the main.  
Their hands still curved as though they held an oar,  
And there were sounds as 'twere of ghostly slides  
Unoiled, slow-running, miseries to use.  
'Why look not these upon the blessed sun ?'  
So to my guide spake I, 'and wherefore lights  
The torment of the slides upon their sin ?'  
'My son,' spake gentle Virgil, 'in their life  
These were the tainted wethers of the flock,  
By some called corkers, passengers by some.

<sup>1</sup> University and Merton.

<sup>2</sup> Magdalen.

<sup>3</sup> Queen's.

<sup>4</sup> Christ Church.

<sup>5</sup> Lincoln.

## UNPUBLISHED CANTO OF DANTE

In no Algerian corsairs did they toil  
Or Indian proas or great galleons  
Laden with spice from Ternate or Tydore ;  
Nay, none of these, my son, but rather theirs  
It was to row pirogues to hapless doom  
Beneath Oxonia's towers : his College put  
A trust in each of them, a trust misplaced.  
Wherefore by day and night must each row bow  
To Charon's stroke, and much the old man gibes  
In phrases of his art of hang and slide  
And hands and stretcher work and bucketing.  
Such words the Arno knows not, nor can I  
Or thou explain them, 'tis enough to know  
They now enjoy the hell whereto of old  
Instructors on the bank committed them.  
Hark ! Charon summons him another bow ;  
Six spirit-cargoes did the last row o'er  
Till at the end he fainted ; Charon called  
For Magdalen last and now he calls for Queen's.'

. . . . .

## MY FIRST TORPID

TEA, steaks and chops, chops, steaks and tea,  
A morning tub at seven,  
Two courses rowed at thirty-three,  
Bed ten, asleep eleven.

Our strength was strength as of an ox  
On Easter Day in Seville,  
And all the eight from bow to cox  
Wished lectures at the devil.

We were not high, in fact our place  
(To tell it with precision)  
Was thirteenth in the coming race,  
The second our division.

Our place was low, our hearts beat high  
With lofty aspiration,  
Among those upper boats, thought I,  
We cause some consternation.

And more, the eyes of one sweet maid—  
My wife now, *gratias reddo*—  
Would see the pride of Pembroke laid  
In dust by Christ Church meadow.

## MY FIRST TORPID

The fateful day had come at last—

Ten, five, three, two, one minute,  
Those awful last ten seconds passed,  
And we were fairly in it.

I felt as though my heart had burst,

My throat was dry as Paley,  
No crabs as yet, 'tis past the worst,  
And we are going gaily.

Oh, confidence misplaced ! untaught

Our coxswain was and feeble,  
And that explains why we were caught  
At Saunders' Bridge by Keble.

With fate on our destruction bent

We had not fully reckoned,  
Next day we—quite by accident—  
Were bumped by Balliol second.

At dinner each in wrath down tossed

An extra glass of Burton,  
And that is partly why we lost  
Another place to Merton.

Next day the issue was the same,

We could not keep her steady—  
Of course the coxswain was to blame—  
And we were bumped by Teddy.



## MY FIRST TORPID

There was no boat below the Hall,  
So we took off, and surely  
That coxswain was the cause of all,  
Who sat there so demurely.

He never would admit that this  
Had caused our dire disaster,  
He leaned to the hypothesis  
That other boats were faster.

In vain my lady's eyes were bent  
Each day down stream towards Iffley,  
For months to come in punishment  
She greeted me but stiffly.

Nor did she deign to change her mind  
Till, strong with Nature's physic,  
These hands had helped to leave behind  
The light blue blades at Chiswick ;

Till on the bridge of Barnes she stood,  
And with her kerchief beckoned,  
When passed two boats upon the flood,  
And Cambridge was the second.

## EIGHTS WEEK

WITH APOLOGIES TO LOVIBOND

HANG my lyre upon the willows  
Just where Wadham bumped our Eight,  
Cast from my canoe the pillows,  
Life is drear and desolate.

Oh detestable Canader ! <sup>1</sup>

Thou art now no more to me  
Than some tramping Cardiff trader  
Rolling in the China sea.

Yesterday in thee my Lily  
Said in confidential tones,  
'Did I think her very silly,  
But—she was engaged to Jones.'

Jones ! a smug of purest water,  
*Bounderum boundissimus* ;  
She ! a banker's only daughter ;  
Scandalous, yes, scandalous !

Back, Canader, back to Salter !  
There—I start thee with a kick ;  
Now to go and buy a halter,  
Even though it be on tick.

<sup>1</sup> Undergraduate slang for a Canadian canoe.

## RESPICE FINEM

WE are cheery with chop, we are stalwart with steak,  
And a thousand fresh eggs have been poached for our sake,  
And the squish we've consumed is the coxswain's own  
weight :

They'll have swift oars who bump us, good Boniface  
Eight !

As we lift her together the Queen's men look queer,  
While a crab stays the tenor of Keble's career,  
And the Lincoln long five in wild wonder rows late :  
They'll have swift oars who bump us, good Boniface  
Eight !

We mean to do something, or we will know why ;  
What that something will be you will know by-and-by :  
Cease, Jesus, to jeer us ; cease, Hertford, to hate :  
They'll have swift oars who bump us, good Boniface  
Eight !

Let Corpus be cautious, let Balliol beware,  
And for pain and disaster let Pembroke prepare ;  
For the hope that is high comes to grief that is great :  
They'll have swift oars who bump us, good Boniface  
Eight !

## RESPICE FINEM

We have all bought new blazers, for that is but right  
For a boat which is bound to go upward each night ;  
And the boats all above us, they feel it is fate :  
They'll have swift oars who bump us, good Boniface  
Eight !

. . . . .

There are woes in the world that one cannot explain,  
Some say stroke had no strength, some that two would  
not train ;  
When we fell to the Toshers we felt it was fate :  
They had swift oars who bumped us, good Boniface  
Eight !

## COACHING FROM THE BANK

CITO pulsa remis  
Secat cymba flumen,  
Omnes in extremis  
Exsecrantur lumen.

Nam in ripa tutor  
Ululat ut pardus,  
' Vanis verbis utor,  
Quatuor est tardus.

' Non initiumque  
Signat septem remo,  
Tempus quaecumque  
Nemo notat, nemo.

' Fortiter agatur  
Prora, tres, et ictus,  
Opus simulatur——'  
Cessat hic devictus.

In tutoris rota  
Magna est punctura,  
Machina devota  
Mala ad futura !

## COACHING FROM THE BANK

‘Faciles’ tum ‘cuncti’  
Incipit clamare,  
Opere defuncti  
Cessant remigare.

Ridet tamen laetus  
Parvus gubernator,  
Tutor est quietus  
Silensque iurator.

## TAEDET HORUM TORPIDORUM

CARMEN IN MODUM ARCHIDIACONI GUALTERI DE MAP.

MIHI est propositum octo gubernare,  
Id est cymbae Torpidae dux et princeps stare,  
Inimicis colaphos quinque saltem dare,  
Frustra—quodque sequitur demonstrabit quare.

Magnum in ientaculo carnis damnum bovis,  
Etiamque maius est torrefacti ovis,  
Panis et consumptio nominati ‘Hovis,’  
Unde omnes viribus exultabant novis.

Tandem dies cursum, ante nos carinae  
Primo loco Trinitas, supra quam Reginae,  
Post Vigorniensium dirae spirant minae,  
Et formosae lintribus spectant inquilinae.

Tum bombardam Timsius liberat fragore,  
Corda remigantium trepidant dolore,  
Passim strepunt maximo litora clamore,  
Solvitur memoria, sudor fluit ore.

## TAEDET HORUM TORPIDORUM

Sentio Civili ut quidam candidatus  
Indiae Servitio turpiter locatus,  
Vel Responsionibus praeter spem aratus,  
Cui examinatus est improbe ingratus.

En, propinquiore mox insequentes remi!  
Quid iuvant anhelitus pectorum supremi?  
Inque fine cursuum stamus nos extremi,  
Nullo modo dedecus nigrum potest demi.

Non Ascripti iubilant, ridet Christi Aedes,  
Explanationes sunt gyros, cancer, pedes,  
Quibus rationibus, ictus, nunquam credes,  
Et gubernatoris est vix rosarum sedes.

Causam loci perditae saepe memoravi.  
Cancrum? Non. Vel gyrum? Non. Rectius amavi  
Veritatem simplicem. Rationi favi  
Esse tardiores nos insequente navi.

Eheu, versor pessime, miser gubernator!  
Qualis in Latina est prosa ululator,  
Vel in coetu sobrio sitiens potator,  
Classis vel in Gallia tertiae viator.

Importunum abdicō posthac regnum lori;  
Potius molestiae pulpiti vel fori!  
Novus gubernator nunc valde optat mori,  
Caelum sit propitium huic gubernatori!

For real scholars, i. e. those whom examiners disapprove because their Latin composition is based on the style of Walter de Map and



## TAEDET HORUM TORPIDORUM

the *Select Charters* and the vocabulary of the *Dictionarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, no explanation of the above will be necessary. For the benefit of those who, fresh from the narrow pedantry of Cicero and Livy, triumph in the Schools, the writer would suggest that *colaphus* is a bump, *linter* a barge, *gyrus* swing, *pedes* leg-work, *ictus* the stroke, *lorum* a rudder-string. *Cancer* is a crustacean not generally found in fresh water in most parts of England, but fairly common on the Thames at certain periods of the year. Its capture is generally regarded as an impediment to speed. *Ululator* is that in Latin prose which distinguishes the real scholar from the mere pedant. Third-class carriages in France are not models of comfort.

## THE LECTURE LIST, 1950

PRIVATE TOMKINS OF CORPUS *loquitur*

THE Dean of Christ Church on the bayonet,  
Our President upon the army vet.,  
Professor Jones on khaki. I have been  
To many such, and never yet have seen  
Good come from them. Then Smith of Trinity,  
Frontal attacks on Fridays. Seems to me  
The subject is a little obsolete.  
Kruger of Keble lectures on defeat—  
H'm, h'm!—and Colonel Brown reluctant tells  
He must postpone his course on lyddite shells  
Until next Term. By then, if all goes straight,  
I shall be rowing in our armoured eight;  
For Admiral Maclachlan, G.C.B.,  
First Lord of what was once O.U.B.C.,  
Has promised I may row if I can score  
Ten bull's-eyes at 5,000 yards or more.  
And what of Mods.? I know Vegetius well,  
My red book too; my scouting who can tell?  
Uncertain in my Russian prose I am,  
The idioms of an Afghan telegram

## THE LECTURE LIST, 1950

Run harshly in iambics. Still our Dean  
Thinks that, if no ill fortune intervene,  
My shooting and my scholarship are ripe  
Enough to get a third, that means my stripe ;  
Lance-corporal I hope to be at worst,  
But, oh, to be a sergeant and a first !

## THE EIGHTS RACES, 2001

'Twas midnight : Tims the tenth beside his gun  
Stood ready ; from the masts of every barge  
Electric search-lights flashed. The riveters  
Had ceased their labours, and the funnels blew  
Their wild steam-whistles loud ; in every boat  
Sat heroes girt for battle, one who steered  
And one who made the ponderous engines move,  
And seven who sat on thwarts and looked at them,  
On sliding thwarts, survivals of an age—  
A barbarous age—wherein men used to row.  
With beating hearts we launched our iron-clad craft,  
Plated with wondrous steel that brawny smiths  
In Sheffield forged, and our torpedo lay  
In savage silence on our armoured ram.  
Torpedo-net-protected, keen of gaze,  
Our helmsman sat, and then the starting gun  
Reverberated in the Bagley hills.  
Our stroke was engineer, our engines were  
The latest patent from the banks of Clyde ;  
Stroke pressed the valve and our propeller moved.  
And lo ! the Thames was churned with racing prows  
And swift propellers, and as boat to boat—

## THE EIGHTS RACES, 2001

From Teddy Hall the head to New the foot—  
Drave nearer, hands of watchful helmsmen deft  
For dark destruction launched torpedoes forth,  
The messengers of fate. Then Trinity—  
Vain trust was hers in Tyneside armour-plates !—  
Torpedoed to the death by Skimmery,  
With one loud roar exploded ; all her crew  
Were mangled into naught. Then All Souls came,  
The mighty College of a thousand men,  
And aimed her full torpedo sheer at Queen's ;  
Thereat the engineer of Queen's coaled up,  
And past the Cherwell hasted they to doom ;  
A surge of flame, the funnels of the boat  
Passed fleeter than the swallow's flight. Too late,  
For by the barge of B.N.C. she sank  
Down by the head, and water-tight no more  
Were her compartments. Next passed Somerville,  
By lady B.A.s steered. The Jesuits  
Pressed by the Hindu College sped apace ;  
Salvation Army struck the Japanese  
And left no soul alive. The red-cross launch  
That Lincoln kept to succour drowning men  
Hung on our flank and rescued five of us  
When Somerville torpedo blew us up.  
Meanwhile from all the shore hoarse cries arose  
Of counsellors who counselled wrong, and rode  
On autocycles and electric cars.  
'Stoke up, St. John's !' 'Torpedo, Unattached !'

## THE EIGHTS RACES, 2001

‘Hard, Worcester, hard a-port!’ Three minutes passed,  
The space of time wherein a course is steamed,  
And all the boats were sunk save Exeter,  
Whom Magdalen failed to strike, and also New,  
For she was last and but a paddle-boat.  
Skilled surgeons busied them at Salter’s raft,  
Quick to dispose the wounded and the dead  
In ambulances for the hospital,  
And glad were we, our dead were only four.

## ANY FATHER TO ANY SON<sup>1</sup>

DEPUTATION, O my son,  
Is a noun connoting many,  
But it signifies not one  
Penny.

Insignificant was I  
Till I heard the lively mockings,  
Sonny, hurled by you at my  
Stockings.

Not my most ambitious pup  
Ever dreamed of me in *that* form,  
Breeched and buckled on the up  
Platform.

Some of us—and not a few—  
Wore the clothes of other doctors ;  
What of that ? So did the two  
Proctors.

<sup>1</sup> Written on the occasion of the deputation from the University to present an address to His Majesty on his accession.

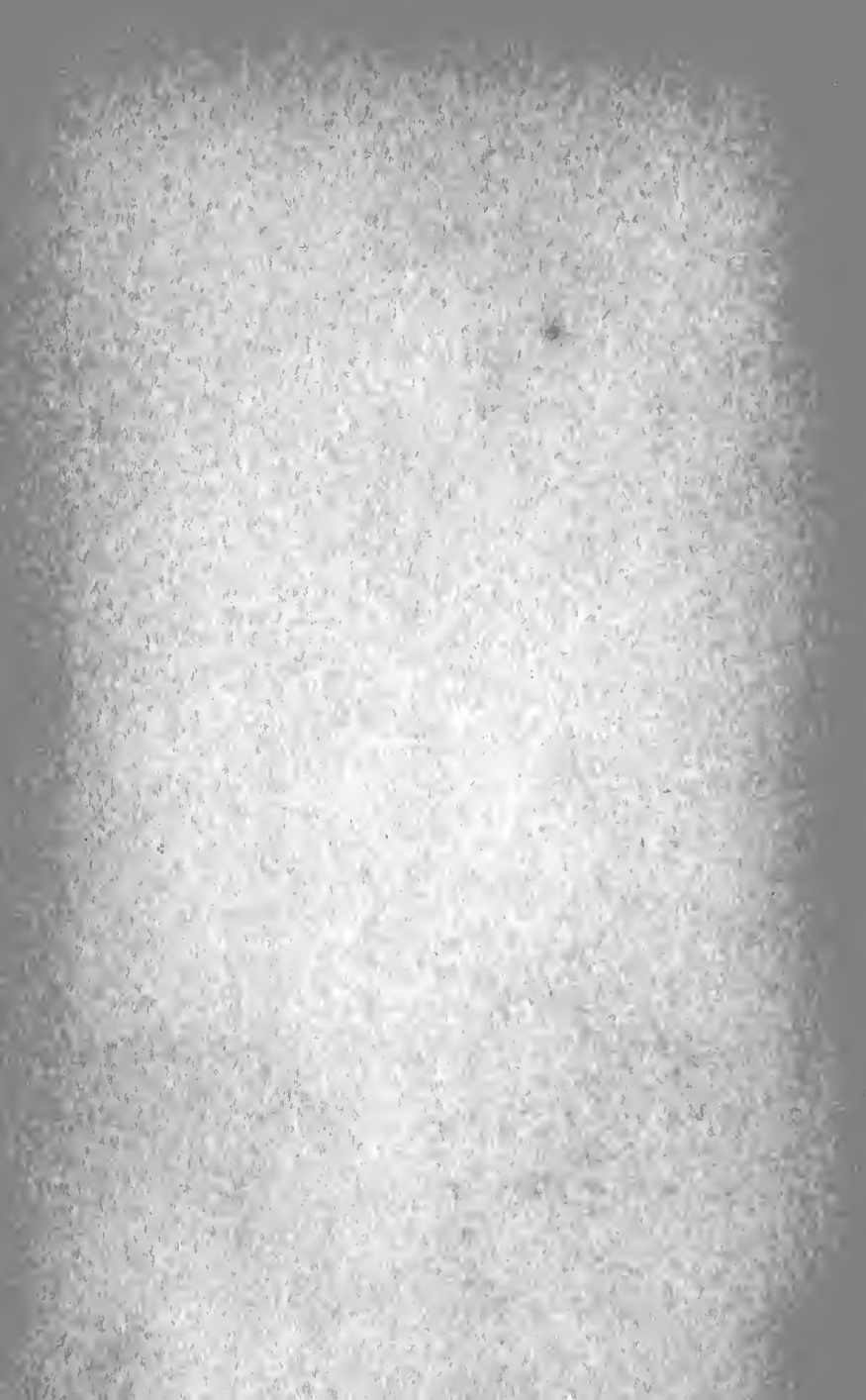
## ANY FATHER TO ANY SON

Insignificant no more,  
I triumphantly march bedward,  
Knowing I have helped to bore  
Edward.

What will come is what has been ;  
When your middle age is dawning,  
*You* may leave a king or queen  
Yawning.



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